(To be published in *Foundations of Indian Psychology*, edited by M. Cornelisson, G. Misra & S. Verma, Publisher: Pearson, New Delhi)

A journey back to the roots: Psychology in India

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Abstract

Psychology as an academic discipline made a new beginning in India in the first decade of this century. Review of research shows that Western theories and concepts still constitute the core of research and teaching programmes in most of the Indian universities. This chapter argues that Indian psychologists live in two parallel worlds: one of west-oriented academic psychology to advance professional growth; and another of less formalized scholarship to satisfy their creative urges. As a result, academic psychology did not get enriched from diverse expertise and life-experiences of Indian psychologists. Though psychology has traversed a long distance in India, lack of direction has cast doubts about the application of psychology in the context of a rapidly changing socio-economic scenario. Psychology in India has remained dissociated from its own vast storehouse of knowledge inherent in the Indian philosophical texts. These scriptures and texts provide immense possibilities of developing psychological theories of self and human development. At the turn of the Millennium, psychology in India is returning to its roots and a new beginning seems to be in the offing.

For almost a century, academic psychology in India has continued to be an alien discipline. In the beginning of the last Century, psychology was imported lock-stock-barrel from the West and was first implanted in 1916 in Calcutta University. The Western model of research and teaching provided the basis on which Indian research grew for a long period. For Indian psychologists trained in the western traditions, it has been a long journey to turn towards their own heritage and take Indian concepts and theories germane to understanding Indian social reality. Indeed, in this long history, concerns have been voiced from time to time to align psychology with contemporary social issues, so as to meet the challenges of rapid socio-economic and global changes. Looking back, one gets an impression that psychology in India has come a long way to find its roots in its own native wisdom, though it still has to cover much ground to become a science of Indian origin.

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Throughout its existence as an alien implant, psychology has been struggling to ground itself in the Indian soil and adapt to local conditions. Over the years this implant has grown, with branches spreading all over the country. However, it has not borne fruits as expected and has largely remained a sterile academic pursuit, as far as the real issues of national development are concerned. The non-visibility of psychologists in various national forums gives rise to serious concerns about its relevance and future. What kind of psychology we aspire to have in the 21st century is contingent on a better understanding of the present state-of-the-art. This chapter aims to examine the status of psychology in India as a scientific discipline, identifying the factors responsible for its retarded growth. This chapter also discusses the parallel movement now underway to rediscover the knowledge rooted in scriptures and folk practices, and explores its relevance in the present times.

Three sets of arguments are put forward to explain the retarded growth of academic psychology in India. One, which is more charitable, is the lack of a supportive intellectual climate. In a country where a vast population lives in a condition of subhuman poverty, and decisions about social developmental programmes are politically motivated, any scholarly pursuit is considered peripheral. The academic institutions plagued by a rising student population, political manipulations and lack of funds have gradually become non-performers. There is no premium placed on excellence in teaching and research. Adair, Pandey, Begam, Puhan, and Vora (1995) conducted a study on 64 Indian psychologists through a mailed questionnaire. The survey revealed three major impediments to research productivity: (a) lack of supportive intellectual climate, (b) poor professional support, and (c) inadequate research funding. Ostensibly, the lack of an academic culture and a non-supportive socio-political environment are greatly responsible for the prevailing state of affairs. It does explain the overall decline in the academic standards in the country. It, however, throws no light on 'why is psychology in India lagging behind other sisterly disciplines, such as sociology, anthropology and economics?' It brings forth the second line of argument that there are some inherent limitations in psychology as a scientific discipline. Its excessive conformity to empiricist-positivist methodologies and confining to micro-level problems have restricted the scope of its psycho-social inquiry. This methodological approach is insufficient to take up more applied macro-level problems (Dalal, in press). The restricted boundaries of the discipline obviate the need to work in applied settings, or to work with governmental or non-governmental agencies.

The third set of arguments focus on the personal and professional background of Indian psychologists. Psychologists in the first half of this Century were a product of the colonial domination of the Indian society, greatly influenced by Western scholarly traditions. The first generation psychologists after India's Independence were predominantly converts from the philosophy background. This combined with their elitist-urban background; fewer job openings and self-serving research orientation gave Indian psychologists an identity distinct from those who belonged to other sister disciplines. This chapter examines the progress of psychology in India against the backdrop of these arguments. It endeavours to explore the possibilities of psychology becoming a more vibrant science, accepting the challenges of a rapidly changing Indian society. We need a psychology which is a positive discipline conducive to self-growth and social harmony.

Indian psychology has come a long way in the hundred years of its existence. Today, there are large number of teaching and research institutions offering wide range of courses in psychology. It is not known how many colleges and universities offer psychology courses and how many psychologists are professionally active. There are no data which official agencies, like the University Grants Commission, Indian Council of Social Science Research, or Department of Science and Technology can furnish. One estimate (A. K. Jain, 2005) suggests that there are more than 15000 psychologists in India. In any case, India has the largest number of psychologists outside the Western block, and is considered a 'publication giant' among all developing countries (Gilgin & Gilgin, 1987). This rapid expansion of the discipline has aroused many hopes and expectations about its possible contribution to the success of nation-building projects. The problems of poverty, illiteracy, urban decay and disease control cannot be handled on the basis of sound economic planning only, but also require changes in the attitudes and beliefs of people, and their motivations for collective action. This calls for a realistic appraisal of the impediments which psychology in India is currently experiencing. Psychology needs to break its present disciplinary shackles to join hands with other social sciences. Currently, much soul-searching is going on within the discipline and it is realized that psychology in India needs to be rooted in its own history and heritage.

In recent years there have been several good publications which enable a critical evaluation of the development of psychology in India. Some of these writings (Dalal, 1990, 1996, 2002; Misra & Gergen, 1993; D. Sinha, 1986, 1996; J.B.P. Sinha, 1993) have critically

evaluated the progress of psychology. The five surveys of research in psychology (Mitra, 1972; Pareek, 1980, 1981; J. Pandey, 1988, 2001, 2004) cover important research contributions since the beginning of the last century. Pareek and T.V. Rao (1974a), Pestonjee (1986), and NCERT (1981) compiled psychological measures developed in India. Reports prepared by the University Grants Commission (UGC, 1968, 1982, 1999) deal with teaching and research programmes in universities. Some empirical studies (Adair, 1989) have examined the professional status of the discipline of psychology. More recently, Misra (in press), K. Kumar (2005, 2008), Pandey and Singh (2005), Paranjpe (2006) and Varma (2004) have provided incisive understanding of the current status of psychology in India. These publications have formed the basis of preparing this review chapter.

In brief, this chapter traces the genesis of scientific psychology in India in the beginning of the last Century. It examines the constraints and creative pursuits of Indian psychologists in seeking a disciplinary identity. The present chapter is, in a way, an updated and completely revised version of the article initially published (Dalal, 1996). The major focus in this version is on the long and circuitous journey towards indigenization and on the emerging concern to root psychology in Indian traditions. Lastly, some conjectures are made about the possible directions in which psychology is likely to tread in the twenty first century.

20th century psychology in India: a western implant

Indian scriptures dating back thousands of years extensively dealt with the analysis of states of consciousness and contents of mental activities. The important feature of this early exposition is that it is mostly experiential and is a culmination of centuries-old tradition of self-verification. In the ancient Indian scriptures no rigid distinction among religion, philosophy, and psychology was maintained. The overriding consideration was to help individuals in their pursuit of self-realization and liberation from the miseries of life. In this world-view, the source of all suffering was presumed to be within the person, and thus the emphasis was on exploring the 'world within', to alleviate the suffering. The goal was to seek enduring harmony of spirit, mind and body for everlasting happiness. The yoga system evolved very sophisticated mind-control techniques in this pursuit. In contemporary literature this broad field of inquiry is referred to as ‘Indian Psychology’.

These rich traditions, however, had little bearing on academic psychology implanted in India as a Western science during the British rule. Scientific psychology with laboratory work was a novel approach, not having any parallel in traditional Indian psychology. Psychology was first introduced as a subject in the Philosophy Department at Calcutta University. Brojendra Nath Seal who was the then King George V Professor of Mental and Moral Philosophy drafted the first syllabus for experimental psychology and established a laboratory for demonstration purpose in 1905. Eleven years later this laboratory was upgraded as the first psychology department, the Department of Experimental Psychology. Narendra Nath Sengupta, who chaired this department, had his education at Harvard University with Hugo Munsterberg, a student of William Wundt. Laboratory research at Calcutta in the areas of depth perception, psychophysics, and attention inspired early work at other centres. Recognizing the scientific nature of research, psychology was included as a separate section in the Indian Science Congress in 1923. Thus, psychology in India at an early stage acquired the status of a science along with physical and biological sciences, something which Western psychology achieved only after a long struggle. The Indian Psychological Association was founded in 1924 and the Indian Journal of Psychology, the first psychology journal in India, appeared the very next year.

Before these experimental traditions could consolidate, Sengupta left Calcutta. He was succeeded by Girindra Shekhar Bose. Being a medical doctor and a psychiatrist who was in close contact with Sigmund Freud, Bose showed much enthusiasm to promote psychoanalysis. In 1922 he founded the Indian Psychoanalytic Society, which two years later was affiliated with the International Psychoanalytic Society. Bose received his Ph.D. from Calcutta on the 'concept of repression', the first Ph.D. from any Indian University in psychology. He established the Lumbini Park Mental Hospital in Calcutta in 1940, and in 1947 brought out a journal 'Samiksha'. The Department started an Applied Psychology Wing in 1938, when Jung, Meyers, and Spearman were invited to the Silver Jubilee Session of the Indian Science Congress.

Prior to India's Independence from the British rule, other departments were established at Mysore and Patna. M.V. Gopalswami who headed the Department at Mysore was trained at London University with Spearman in the mental testing tradition. He developed Indian adaptations of Western intelligence tests and applied psychological principles in the field of education. Gopalswami was the first to set up an animal laboratory in India. The Department at Patna began in 1946, along with the Institute of Psychological Research and Services headed by

H.P. Maiti. Vocational guidance and counseling was provided to a large number of students and to the general public. Since Maiti was trained with Girindra Shekhar Bose, the orientation was psychoanalytic and clinical. In a short time, Patna emerged as a major centre for teaching, research and counseling services.

Research during this period was mainly in the areas of sensation, perception, psychophysics and reaction time, influenced by the work of Wundt and Titchner. Fascination for laboratory work and value-free research based on the natural science model sustained the interest of Indian psychologists in these areas. Western research in these areas could easily be replicated without considering the cultural factors. In the area of social psychology, early work focused on repeating Allport's experiments on social facilitation on Indian samples. An important work of this period was the rumour study by Prasad (1935). Prasad content-analyzed the rumours doing the rounds during a major earthquake in northern India. He found that most rumours were anxiety-inducing, thereby justifying the fear experienced by earthquake victims. Festinger acknowledged that this work inspired his formulation of the cognitive dissonance theory (Cohen & Cohen, 1977).

Two worlds of Indian psychologists

The concepts and theories in Western psychology have their genesis in the social upheavals in Europe in the 19th Century with the metamorphosis from an agrarian to an industrial society. The discipline evolved to comprehend the complex social realities and the problems of industrialization. With the imperial expansion of modern capitalism, the influence of western knowledge in the colonized societies was inevitable. The popularity of English-medium education made writings of western thinkers accessible to Indian scholars. A large body of this knowledge was alien, even in contradiction to that which was prevalent in the colonized traditional societies. The contradictions were more glaring in colonies, like India, having a strong sense of cultural identity and a rich heritage of scholarly work.

In the West, psychology had moved away from theology and philosophy, and had developed its own methods of inquiry based on the natural science models. Indian psychologists saw that in applying western psychology there was an opportunity of developing a secular identity distinct from that of religion and philosophy, which was not possible within indigenous

intellectual traditions integrating philosophy, spirituality and psychology. Moreover, due to the neglect of many centuries, Indian psychology was not well equipped to examine the contemporary world and did not have tools to explain the existing social and moral decay of the Indian society. There were no new concepts, theories and methods in Indian psychology applicable to the changing individual and social order.

Alignment with western positivism gave Indian psychologists an opportunity to make a fresh beginning. The emerging scientific discipline of psychology gave rise to some hope of generating radically different explanations of the prolonged colonial rule. There were exciting possibilities of making important discoveries about Indian people and society. Also, one could hope that the explanations of positive science would provide the much needed respectability to Indian cultural practices and rituals. At the personal level, it gave a new respectability to the upwardly mobile psychology professionals who mostly hailed from upper-class western-educated elite. Although, as Nandy (1995) stated in the context of Girindra Shekhar Bose, there was an awareness that the sectoral and uni-dimensional approach of academic psychology cannot yield in-depth analysis of the socio-psychological problems of Indian society, it could also not establish durable links with Indian traditions and belief systems.

Nandy (1995) further stated, "As a result, the usual encounter between an ancient culture with its distinctive culture of science and an exogenous science with its own distinctive culture fractured the self-definition not only of Bose but of many others involved in the similar enterprise" (p. 83). Caught between the two worlds, Indian psychologists always had a problem in balancing between a number of polarities: metaphysical versus empirical; clinical versus experimental; intuitive versus objective. The Indian mind, even if trained to be a scientist, often finds it difficult to ruthlessly pursue the objective reality, something which comes perhaps naturally to a Westerner. Thus, conflicting elements are resolved into a suspension rather than a solution. "The aesthetic satisfaction of a Hindu myth resides in full savoring of both the extremes rather than seeking a synthesis" (Kakar, 1982, p. 11). Indian psychologists compartmentalized their work in the Western psychological tradition from other scholarly and personally satisfying creative pursuits. They simultaneously lived in two different worlds without any significant overlap.

How Indian psychologists before Independence lived in two different worlds can be illustrated with some examples. Sir Brojendra Nath Seal, who established the first psychology laboratory in the country to promote experimental psychology, was a great historian of ancient Indian science and was the inspiration for Jadunath Sinha to bring out his monumental work on Indian psychology. N. N. Sengupta who was trained to be an experimental psychologist had a large number of non-empirical papers in scientific journals. His writings covered the whole range from the psychology of mysticism to the psychology of Western dance. Sengupta did not stay in Calcutta for long and joined the Philosophy Department at Lucknow University. There he co-authored a book with an eminent sociologist, Radhakamal Mukherjee, 'Introduction to Social Psychology' in the year 1928. The orientation of this book was more sociological than psychological. As Rajanarayan (1983) wrote in his biographical note, he turned religious and got interested in mystical traditions and published work in this area. Girindra Shekhar Bose had, along with his important work in the area of psychoanalysis, serialized an interpretation of the holy Gita in the prestigious Bengali magazine 'Pravasi' without any direct reference to psychoanalytic concepts (Nandy, 1995). Bose also wrote a long commentary on Indian sacred texts in Bengali, titled 'Purana Pravesa'. Gopalswami, who was at Mysore, came from an affluent background and maintained interest in two diverse fields - intelligence testing and animal laboratory work and besides, he had his own private radio station and was involved in various cultural activities.

These illustrations are cited to give some clues about how Indian psychologists managed to live simultaneously in two worlds with little overlap. Thus it is no surprise that Indian psychologists remained apolitical all along. There is no reflection in their work of the predominant social and political movements, even that of the freedom movement. Indian psychologists remained on the edge of the society, as far as their professional activities were concerned. Their research lacked continuity, commitment and conviction. The situation changed only marginally after Independence.

Durganand Sinha, who may be considered as one of the architects of modern Indian psychology has observed in his prolific writings that early attempts at formulation of Indian Psychology were rejected by psychologists in India who were trained in the empirical tradition, because of such notions like rebirth, transmigration of souls, and supernatural powers. It was considered as “glib talk”, “revivalism” and “uncritical worship of the past” and the term Indian

Psychology acquired a "pejorative connotation". So what is 'spiritual psychology' for western academicians becomes 'revivalism' for Indian academicians! Reasons for such resistance and rejection of psychology grounded in traditional ideas is primarily due to the negative attitude that we have inherited from our colonial past on the one hand and the influence of the scientific worldview on the other (Dalal, 2002; Paranjpe, 2002).

It may be argued that a vast majority of Indian psychologists have shied away from Indian psychological perspectives because of this attitude and the religio-philosophical context in which those perspectives are embedded. But, paradoxically a majority of them share the same socio-cultural context with the rest of the Indian population and are guided by the same religio-philosophical perspectives, which have shaped the attitudes, emotions, motivations, morals, values, etc., of the Indian masses in their day-to-day living! As Kiran Kumar (2008) observed, this situation has created some kind of a split in the personality – psychologist as a professional vs. psychologist as a person – and it has contributed for lack of creativity and originality in what one does, and draining of personal resources and energy resulting in 'burn out' among many. A psychologist in his/her role as a scientist conducts the professional activities with one set of assumptions and beliefs and as a person lives and acts with another set of assumptions and beliefs among fellow humans.

One reason why Indian psychologists could live in two parallel worlds was probably because the colonial rulers did not see much utility of psychology in consolidating their empire. This, for example, was not true in the case of sociology and social anthropology, which had much to contribute to the smooth functioning of the colonial administration in India (Dhanangare, 1985). Indian culture and society was totally unfamiliar to the colonial officials when they first arrived. The unique systems of caste, religion, tribal and rural communities, rituals, beliefs, traditions were all baffling to an Englishman. These had no parallel in the experiences of the Western societies. Thus, in the absence of proper understanding of Indian social realities the colonial administrators were facing many problems in their smooth functioning. There was much urgency and support for research on these topics. Neither Indian psychology nor western psychological research held any such promise and were largely ignored. It is understandable that the Britishers did not promote psychology in India in the same way as they did in the case of sociology and social anthropology.

In fact, Indian culture with its liberal and multiple traditions did not offer resistance to this new emerging science. In the West, Descartean philosophy had to face opposition from theology for a long time. Psychoanalysis had a very controversial entry into western society; many of the books by Freud were initially banned. In India psychoanalysis was accepted without anyone raising an eyebrow. The three main streams of academic psychology in India - experimental psychology, psychoanalysis and intelligence testing were viewed as culture-free, justifying uncritical borrowing from the west.

The fact that psychologists in India lived in two worlds did not change much after Independence, but rather became more pronounced. In most universities, psychology departments were established by splitting the departments of philosophy. As a result, a large number of philosophy faculty moved to the newly formed psychology departments; many who opted for psychology were those who saw better career opportunities in the new departments. This movement from philosophy to psychology was so pervasive that by the end of the 1960s a majority of chairmen in psychology departments had a philosophy background. In normal course this could have given a strong philosophical knowledge base to psychology, making it richer in terms of indigenous concepts and theories. But this did not happen. In their enthusiasm to establish a new identity as scientists, these faculty members with a background in philosophy completely dissociated themselves from their parent discipline. They were more fascinated by the idea of value-free and culturally-neutral experimental work. The areas they showed interest in were memory, psychophysics, perception, learning, pattern recognition, etc., which could be studied without bringing in the cultural context. These faculty members from philosophy had little training in research methodology. Their major quest, therefore, was to acquire methodological sophistication and mastery over statistical techniques. In the process they became ardent adherents of Western research methods. Thus, despite their firm moorings in ancient Indian psychology, psychology in India did not reap the fruits of this unique advantage. Indian psychologists were still coexisting in two different worlds. As professionals they were engaged in scientific research based on Western models but to satisfy their creative urges they would engage in other activities. This Indian experience was not an exception in this respect. In neighbouring Pakistan (Ansari, 1990) and Bangladesh (Hamida Begam, 1990) it was the same story, as in many other former colonies.

Living in two different worlds had at least two major implications for the growth of psychology. One, psychologists did not engage in thematic research over a long period of time. They kept hopping from one area to another and did not sustain their interest in one theme. Often extrinsic factors - funds, opportunities, etc., became more decisive factors for conducting research, than any intrinsic interest in the topic. Even a cursory glance at their published works would reveal that most of the Indian psychologists had covered a wide range of topics. It could be baffling to a western researcher but in India it is a normal practice. Researchers did not cultivate any theoretical interest, or adhered to a particular theoretical position in their research. There are few Indian researchers whose work has a cumulative effect. Two, the professional bodies of Indian psychologists rarely took any stand on vital national issues. They were more interested in holding annual conferences and meetings, where rarely substantive issues were passionately debated. Most of the conflicts that weakened these professional organizations were of an interpersonal nature. There was no larger vision of the psychology to be.

Initiatives towards socially relevant research

India's Independence from the colonial rule in 1947 did bring changes in the content and concerns of psychological research. The National Government recognized the importance of social science teaching and research in attaining the objectives of national reconstruction and social development. There was much hope and expectation about the role that the social sciences could play in this endeavour. Psychologists began to realize that they have a responsibility to engage in socially relevant research.

As an example, psychologists responded to the human tragedy of the partition of India. As an aftermath thousands were killed in Hindu-Muslim riots, followed by a massive influx of refugees from across the border. Many psychological studies of that period evidenced this concern in the rioting behaviour of the masses. Realizing the urgent need of research in this area, the Ministry of Education procured the services of Gardner Murphy through UNESCO in 1950 to develop a research programme to investigate the causes of communal violence. Many Indian psychologists collaborated on this project which culminated in the book edited by Murphy in 1953 entitled 'In the Minds of Men'. They continued working in this area in later years also.

Another area which emerged during this period but was not sustained in the later decades, is counseling and guidance. The guidance bureau at Patna inspired the establishment of similar bureaus in other states. U.P Psychological Bureau was among the first ones, established in 1947. This Bureau under the leadership of Sohan Lal, and thereafter of C.M. Bhatia and S.N. Mehrotra adapted many intelligence and aptitude tests in Hindi, and provided counseling services to the public. The Bihar Psychological Bureau under the guidance of Mohsin worked on similar lines. In Bombay, Parsi Panchayat Vocational Guidance Bureau provided services to students, as well as to referred cases. The Bureau also brought out the *Journal of Vocational and Educational Guidance*. This journal played an important role in furthering the guidance movement in this country. However, the social and political conditions were just not ripe for the expansion of this movement and not enough of a research base was built up to sustain this movement. Consequently, instead of growing, the movement lost its momentum (D. Sinha, 1986). The first two ICSSR surveys of research in psychology are testimony to the fact that this area did not yield much research in later years.

A new development after Independence was the growth of psychology outside the university system. The Ahmedabad Textile Industries Research Association (ATIRA) was established in 1950, where Kamla Chowdhury conducted large-scale surveys to study motivational problems in the textile industries. Erikson and McClelland were frequent visitors to this Institute. In the clinical field, advanced training programmes were introduced at the All India Institute of Mental Health (now known as the National Institute of Mental Health and Neuro-Sciences) in 1955, followed by the Hospital for Mental Diseases in Ranchi (1962). Indian armed forces also showed interest in using psychological tests in personnel selection. For this, the Psychological Research Wing of the Defense Science Organization was set up in 1949. The aim of this Wing was not only to help in the election of army personnel but also to do research on the whole range of defense related problems, such as motivation and morale of the armed forces, leadership, mental health, stress, rehabilitation of disabled war veterans and development of psychological tests. Later on this Wing was elevated as the Defense Institute of Psychological Research, employing a large number of psychologists.

These efforts and opportunities signify the contribution which psychology could make in different domains of national life. Psychology as a discipline was somehow not prepared to seize these initiatives. The poor training and replicative nature of research did not prepare them to

confront real life problems. A few psychologists did participate in developmental programmes, but overall the discipline remained on the margin. It was the time when other social scientists, e.g., sociologists and economists had already started making their presence felt.

Rapid but unplanned expansion

In the fifties and sixties the growth of psychology in Indian universities was phenomenal. In 1956 the University Grants Commission (UGC) was constituted and it provided funds to various universities to start psychology departments. As a result, the number of psychology departments increased to 32 by the end of 1960s.

This rapid expansion of psychology, though impressive, was quite unplanned. In the absence of any definite educational policy of the government, these departments were often created as a part of the general expansion of higher education and at times without any particular academic considerations. No serious thinking preceded in establishing these departments in terms of their need-based specialization. Nevertheless, in the course of their growth many departments developed a distinct identity (R. E. Pandey, 1969). For example, departments became known for their research in the areas of rural and social psychology (Allahabad), test construction (Mysore), industrial psychology (Osmania), measurement and guidance (Patna), or verbal learning (Poona). Most departments developed around one dominant scholar, usually the person heading the department. His interest and training were decisive factors in the specialization of that department. Psychology during those days (this is more or less true even today) developed around personalities, and when those scholars departed, many centres collapsed, or showed shifts in specialization.

In the late sixties, concerned about the declining standards of university departments and to facilitate research programmes, UGC started a new scheme of Centres for Advanced Studies and Centres for Special Assistance. Under these schemes two psychology departments (at Utkal and Allahabad) were elevated to the status of Centres of Advanced Studies in Psychology. The idea was to develop some departments as research centres at par with the best in the world with the help of liberal government support. Departments at Delhi, Gorakhpur and Tirupati were also elevated to the status of Centre of Special Assistance, a penultimate stage to receiving Advanced Centre status. These departments were expected to provide leadership in the areas of research,

teaching and professional activities.

Though the practice of going abroad for higher education was there since long, a significant development after Independence was the beginning of a number of educational exchange programmes. The most sought after were the fellowships of Commonwealth, Fulbright and Ford Foundation. A number of bilateral academic exchange programmes were commissioned by UGC and the Ministry of Education, Government of India. Under these schemes a large number of Indian scholars went to Britain, Canada, and United States for doctoral and post-doctoral training in the sixties and seventies. When they returned to occupy academic positions, they not only had better training in research techniques but also brought along contemporary research ideas, and continued academic collaboration with their seminal professors abroad. This brought qualitative changes in teaching and research. Under these exchange programmes many western scholars also visited Indian universities. Psychology in India was dominated by the scholars trained abroad for another two decades. Equipped with freshly acquired expertise in western theories and methods, they exhibited much interest in applying their knowledge to understand and solve native social problems.

Another new development was the expansion of teaching of psychology in various professional courses in the fields of engineering, agriculture, management and medical sciences. All five Indian Institutes of Technology have departments of Humanities and Social Sciences of which psychology is a constituent subject with Ph.D. programmes. All four Indian Institutes of Management have departments of Organizational Behavior. Psychology is taught in undergraduate classes, particularly in Home Science and Extension Education departments in 26 agricultural universities and 28 agriculture institutes. In medical colleges, psychology is part of a course on Preventive and Social Medicine. But as noted by Atal (1976), most of these courses in agriculture and medical are taught by junior staff, research assistants, and demonstrators and have low priority. The situation has not changed much till date.

Expansion of psychology departments within the university system continued in the 1970s. However, it became increasingly difficult to conduct research in the university departments. In a bureaucratic university set up, there was little organizational support for pursuing research projects. Again, due to mass entry of students in the higher education and chronic campus unrest for political reasons, the academic environment was on the decline. Heavy teaching, and no incentive for research had a telling effect on the research output of the

universities. As a result, research in psychology started growing outside the university system. Psychologists having research inclinations preferred to join various research institutes. A.N.S. Institute of Social Studies, Patna, Centre for the Study of Developing Societies, New Delhi, and National Institute of Community Development, Hyderabad are examples of some prominent institutes which became centres of research in psychology.

Many governmental and autonomous institutions, such as National Council of Educational Research and Training (NCERT), National Institute of Educational Policy and Administration (NIEPA), National Institute of Public Cooperation and Child Development (NIPCCD), National Institute of Health and Family Welfare (NIHFW) (all in Delhi), Indian Institute of Science, Bangalore, Academic Staff College, Hyderabad, Indian Statistical Institute, Calcutta, have become centres of applied research in different fields of psychology. There are a large number of national and international voluntary agencies which seek the services of psychologists to carry out their research and field projects.

Consolidation of the Western research

Two major streams of research, experimental and testing, continued to grow after independence. The experimental work in the areas of perception, learning and memory was primarily replications of the Western studies. There are some good examples of long-term research programmes. Chatterjee (1954) conducted experiments for almost two decades on the role of intensity, time interval and distance between stimuli in producing an optimal apparent movement. Tayal (1970) proposed a broad unifying model through which a number of related visual phenomena could be explained by a new set of principles, challenging the theoretical basis of Fechner's law. In the area of verbal conditioning J. P. Das (1962) proposed that semantic satiation is a direct function of attentional decrement rather than of inhibition of meaning. Kothurkar (1972) did a series of studies on verbal learning and memory processes. Experimental work in comparative psychology was pioneered by S.D. Singh (1963) who studied the social behaviour of rhesus monkeys. Though M. Singh at Mysore and S. K. Misra at Bhubaneshwar continued working in this area, comparative psychology did not take off at other centres of higher learning.

Research in the area of psychological testing made a quantum leap after Independence. The orientation was still predominantly British. Those who could go abroad for graduate training generally went to London and Edinburgh (Barnett, 1955). They were trained in the mental testing traditions of Spearman and Thomson. On their return, these psychologists were preoccupied with the assessment of intelligence by preparing Indian adaptations of Spearman, Binet-Simon, Stanford-Binet and Terman-Merrill scales in Indian languages. A large number of Christian missionaries were also involved in the construction and validation of psychological tests for their mission schools (Mitra, 1972). Puhan (1994), in his presidential address to the Vth Annual Convention of National Academy of Psychology, critically reviewed the history of the personality test movement in India.

Work at early stages in this area dealt with construction and standardization of achievement and intelligence tests, aptitude scales and personality inventories. Many popular Western tests were adapted into Indian languages. The National Council of Educational Research and Training reviewed all the tests that had been prepared up to 1961 (NCERT, 1966). A large number of these tests were adaptations of Western tests. In the directory compiled by Pareek and T.V. Rao (1974a), of the 503 tests, 218 were in the section of personality. Within personality, one out of five tests was related to motivational variables. Even among those classified within the general category, a large number were multidimensional personality tests, or measures of one or more motivational variables. The motivational tests were primarily in the domains of achievement motivation, anxiety, level of aspiration and self-concept.

A few general observations hold for the majority of these tests. First, most of the tests require certain language skills and thus are appropriate only for urban, educated samples. Half of the tests listed in Pareek and T.V. Rao's (1974a) directory were for school and college level students. Second, classical psychometric theory guided the construction of almost all of these tests which, owing to sub-cultural and language differences merit a fresh look at their usefulness. Third, there has been a general neglect in establishing the validity of these tests. More than 85 per cent of the tests included in the Handbook had indeed no information regarding test validity. Thus, though a large number of tests were developed in India, their quality left much to be desired. The Second Handbook of tests by Pestonjee (1986) showed considerable improvement. The 326 tests developed in the preceding decade showed the similar trend as in the first

Handbook with two differences. First, more than 60% of the tests were reported with validity data, and secondly, there were more Indian tests and adaptations of Western tests.

Using these tests a large number of surveys were undertaken to investigate the prevalence of mental health problems by Sethi and his associates (Sethi, Gupta, & Kumar, 1967; Sethi, Gupta, Kumar, & Promilla, 1972) in Lucknow, by Dube (1970) in Agra, by Elnager, Mitra, and Rao (1971) in rural Bengal, and by Verghese (1973) in Vellore. There were very few in-depth studies of the problem areas. Research work in the areas of epidemiology of mental illness, phenomenology of depressive behavior, drug abuse, yoga and health, psychosocial aspects of family planning, and mental retardation was slowly gathering momentum by the seventies (see G. G. Prabhu, 1980). In the area of clinical psychology most of the research activities were confined to diagnosis and prognosis of mental diseases. Wig and Akhtar (1974) have reviewed the important psychiatric research in India conducted during 1947-1972. Murthy (1980) observed that Western influence was significant in the use of clinical techniques, such as sensitization, aversion therapy, feedback therapy, classical and operant conditioning techniques in treatment of psychogenic illnesses. Behavioural therapies were quite popular and though psychoanalysis was still practiced, its popularity was on the decline. Recently, interest has grown in examining traditional healing practices in the treatment of mental illnesses (e.g., Swami Ram: Yoga and Psychotherapy, 1976; Kakar: Shamans, Mystics and Doctors, 1982). The area which has emerged more recently is health psychology (Dalal, 2001) - to study the role of psychological and cultural factors in affecting health behaviour.

An applied field that began to grow after Independence was industrial psychology. Rapid industrialization in the 1950s and 1960s created a need for better understanding of the labour-management relationship and organizational efficiency. Psychological research projects on job attitude, work incentive, absenteeism, and job satisfaction were quite popular till the 1970s. Ganguli's (1961) book, “Industrial Productivity and Motivation”, is an example of the concerns of that period. With the launching of many self-employment schemes by the Central Government in the 1960s, the research focus shifted to developing training programmes for inculcating entrepreneurship. McClelland's theory of achievement motivation (1961) provided the basis for launching a unique experiment to impart training for achievement at the Small Industries Extension Training Institute, Hyderabad. The findings of this innovative training were not conclusive, and eventually Indian psychologists lost interest in such experimentation.

With the shift in research from industrial to organizational behaviour, the interest grew in studying all spheres of organized work activities. Research on the influence of socio-economic factors and traditional culture on organizational functioning started attracting Indian psychologists. The two chapters in the Third Survey (1988) by Padaki on job attitudes and by Khandawala on organizational effectiveness cover a large number of Indian work in these areas.

Communal and caste conflicts being perennial problems in India, social prejudice, intergroup relations and socialization of the Indian child emerged as major research interest. Rath and Sircar (1960), and Anant (1970) studied caste stereotypes. Paranjpe's (1970) book, 'Caste Prejudice and the Individual' was based on a survey of college students' prejudice against low caste members. The studies of attitude towards the Chinese (A. K. P. Sinha & Upadhyaya, 1960) are oft-quoted studies of change in attitude as a result of historical events (border dispute with China which led to war). A. K. Singh (1981) examined development of religious identity and prejudice in children, and more recently, Deridder and Tripathi (1992) studied social consequences of norm violation by different ethnic groups. The work in the field of socialization and child rearing practices in India has also been substantial. Two field studies, which inspired many studies of the early period, are by a Britisher, Carstairs ("The Twice Born", 1957) and by two Americans, Minturn and Hitchcock ("The Rajputs of Khalapur", 1966). Work on similar lines has been carried out by Anandlakshmy (1975, 1982) and others. Kakar (1978) examined socialization and child rearing in light of the elaborate system of rituals and practices prevalent in Hindu culture. Saraswathi (1987) brought out an annoted bibliography of the work done in India in the preceding decade.

To take stock of the state of research, Ganguli (1971) reviewed about two thousand research publications of the period 1920 to 1967. He found that the five most important areas of work in order of importance were social (15.9%), experimental (13.7%), mental testing (13.0%), general (10.6%) and industrial (3.6%). An analysis of the publications by Mitra (1972) showed that areas of clinical, social, personality and experimental accounted for half of the total number of publications examined. In a similar analysis, 22 years later, J. B. P. Sinha (1993) reported that clinical, social, personality and industrial-organizational psychology accounted for 70% of all the publications. The overall growth rate of research publications was 5.57% in the 1950s, 14.28% in the 1960s and 46.22% in the 1970s. Dalal and Sharma (1990) examined the growth pattern of research for the period 1972-1986 by content analyzing the abstracts included in 'Indian

Psychological Abstracts' in the areas of social psychology and personality. It is interesting to note that in personality research, in the initial period (1972-76), one-fourth of the studies used the experimental method, the use of which declined in later years. In social psychology, only 13% of the studies employed the experimental method, which remained the same in the following years. In personality research, there were an increasingly large number of theoretical papers, whereas in social research, questionnaire method became more popular over the years. The use of student population in this research was much less than that found in Western research.

A crisis of identity

In the 70s and 80s a number of review papers were published to take stock of the contributions made by Indian psychologists, and of the emerging trends. Interestingly, these appraisals of research publications brought home this realization that psychology in India is mostly a poor imitation of western research and does not lead to understanding Indian social reality. A crisis was perceptible in the discipline in the mid-70s, as many felt that Indian psychology was going nowhere. The following passages present a brief account of this crisis of direction and progress.

By the mid-1970s the enthusiasm with which the Western-educated Indian psychologists were conducting research was waning. Indian scholars were getting restive, as Western psychology was failing to throw light on Indian social issues. Sixty years of Western psychology in India had not yielded any significant discoveries. Nandy (1974) argued, "Indian psychology has become not merely imitative and subservient but also dull and replicative" (p. 5). K.G. Agrawal (1973) called psychology in India as that of 'adoptology'. There was growing disillusionment about the applicability of Western theories and their mindless testing in India. The failure to resolve inner conflicts of cherishing Indian cultural values at the personal level and maintaining high standards of objectivity at the professional level was reflected in methodologically sophisticated but socially irrelevant research. As a result, Indian psychologists were increasingly marginalized in the society. A strong need was felt to return to the cultural roots. D. Sinha (1977) urged that the scientific understanding of Indian social reality should benefit from its vast treasure of traditional psychological knowledge accumulated over centuries. He called for the development of an indigenous psychology with its own paradigms to

understand developmental problems of the region. In short, psychology in India was seeking its own identity.

What will make psychology more relevant in the Indian context? In the concluding chapter of the Second Survey of Research in Psychology, Pareek (1981) considered psychology in India as standing at the "cross-roads". He discussed many referents of relevance, namely, conceptual, methodological, professional, and socio-cultural, in order to build the capability of the discipline to respond to the needs of the society. There are not many pointers that the situation had changed since then. D. Sinha (1986) also stressed on finding appropriate theoretical framework and research methodologies to make the subject "socially relevant to meet the needs of a changing society" (p. 63). J. Pandey (1988), in the Third Survey of Research in Psychology, responding to Pareek's comment, concluded that psychology is outgrowing the alien models and "... probably psychology is not strictly standing at the cross-roads" (p. 354). In the Fourth Survey, J. Pandey (2001, 2002, 2004) reported the progress of indigenous psychology by citing important publications. However, as Pandey (2004) noted, “Though these examples of indigenous efforts are laudable, the question remains whether this emerging trend has succeeded in influencing mainstream psychology (bulk of psychology) in terms of academic programmes of teaching and research” (pp. 347-348).

The ongoing debate did result in some noticeable change in the content and quality of Indian research. Indian psychologists were showing more interest in studying problems relevant to the country using Indian concepts and theories. Neki (1973), for example, suggested a teacher-pupil model in clinical counseling to break cultural and social barriers. J.B.P. Sinha (1980) proposed a new leadership style - nurturant task-master, which is more likely to succeed in Indian work organizations. Kakar (1982, 1991) studied the role of traditional healers in maintaining mental health in traditional societies. Ramchandra Rao (1983) and Palsane, Bhavasari, Goswami, and Evans (1986) developed a concept of stress based on ancient scriptures. Pande and Naidu (1992) developed a measure to study the concept of detachment and its mental health consequences.

However, this crisis of the discipline’s identity was of concern for only a handful of psychologists. J.B.P. Sinha (1993) made a distinction between the bulk and the front of psychological research. Not much has changed in the mass produced bulk of the research which

is still replicative and imitative. However, as a response to a long debate and changing global scenario, the front-runners have started taking indigenous psychology more seriously. As argued by Manasi Kumar (2006), the inertia and lackadaisical stance of Indian psychologists towards attending to relevant social problems continued, and their rigidities in exploring new epistemologies and cross-fertilizations within and outside the discipline led to further replication of outdated and a-contextual Western psychological researches. Sitting rather too comfortably in the pigeon holes of the University departments, which do not mirror socio-cultural realities of the common man in India, psychologists have increasingly chosen to remain insular and self-absorbed. Even during the times when social sciences were revamping and scrutinizing their colonial baggage, essentially during the seventies and early eighties, Indian psychologists remained far from this self-reflexive, deconstructive enterprise that was in many ways deeply political in character and calling.

Again, the efforts to investigate indigenous concepts and theories were fragmented and did not show any long-term research commitment. It is heartening to find research articles employing Indian concepts, but these are mostly one-time affairs lacking in in-depth analysis. The best examples of thematic research over a long period have still employed Western models (e.g., Kanekar, 1988; R. Singh, 1986). Relevant in this context is the fact that major funding agencies play an important role in setting the priority areas of research endeavours. The UGC, NCERT and ICSSR particularly, have shaped the nature and direction of research in the past 4 decades. A perusal of the research projects sanctioned by the ICSSR shows that whereas between 1969-1972 no research project on tribal communities was funded, during 1982-85 27% of the projects financed were tribal studies. This explains the spurt of research in this area in the last decade.

A journey toward indigenous psychology

The core of indigenization is the belief that all knowledge, including that of psychology, is rooted in the prevalent world-view of a community and is conditioned by historical and socio-cultural factors. D. Sinha (1994) discussed in detail the indigenization of psychology in India. He refers to two facets of indigenization. The first is purely the product of culture, the concepts and categories which are culture-bound. The second is the product of the interaction of cultural

variables with concepts, theories and methods introduced from outside. J. B. P. Sinha (2002) has referred to these two as endogenous and exogenous indigenization. He further expanded the domain by referring to two variants of each kind of indigenization. The first one is a relatively more purist one, having more proximity either to the psycho-spiritual Indian thought system, or to the positivistic mainstream western psychology. The second variant accepts the salience of the traditions but maintains greater flexibility in choosing concepts, theories and methods. They differ mainly in terms of their allegiance to either Indian systems of thought, or to western psychology. Taken together they can encompass the whole range of indigenization in Indian psychological research. Misra and Mohanty's (2002) edited book '*Perspectives on Indigenous Psychology*' is a good anthology of research in this area.

Taking lead from the above discussion, it is argued in this paper that indigenous research has moved along two different streams. One considers indigenization as a gradual process. A majority of psychologists in India are trained in Western models, and for them it is not feasible to make any sudden shift towards indigenously developed theories and methods. It is but natural for them to continue using concepts and tests borrowed from the West, albeit with increasing sensitivity to the cultural context. The same trend is observable in many other developing countries also (Marriott, 1992)

The Canadian psychologist, John Adair, saw indigenization as a gradual process, and in collaboration with his Indian colleagues, developed a scale to measure the degree of indigenization. Adair (1989) operationalized indigenization in terms of - (1) cultural sensitivity of research in designing a study and discussing its findings, (2) citation from one's own culture, (3) problem orientation, (4) development of culture-based concepts, theories and methods, (5) culturally anchored tests, and (6) cross-cultural comparisons. Adair and colleagues concluded on the basis of content analysis of a sample of over 300 journal articles that there was progress in indigenization of psychology in India, albeit at a slow pace (Adair, Puhan & Vohra, 1993). It is important to note in this context that, as Adair and others clarify, their focus is on the indigenisation of an "imported discipline", and not on "endogenous development" of psychology based on indigenous sources.

Viewing retrospectively, this line of thinking led to the development of three streams of research: problem-oriented research, cross-cultural psychology and Indian psychology. In the

1970's and later period, there was excitement about western theories, which held promises of dealing with the problems in the Indian setting. The main argument was that psychological knowledge should contribute to solving the problems of developing societies. Reviewing relevant Indian work, J. B. P. Sinha (1973) examined the methodological challenges in conducting problem-oriented research. Studies of political behaviour (Mehta, 1975), developmental norms for pre-school children (Murlidharan, 1971), change in level of aspiration and motivation of farmers (D. Sinha, 1969), prolonged deprivation (Misra and L. B. Tripathi, 1982), health modernity (A. K. Singh, 1983) are examples of such research. Pareek and T.V. Rao (1974b) reviewed researches in the field of family planning and presented a conceptual model of fertility-regulating behaviour. This concern of studying Indian problems is visible in a number of later studies. It was also realized that Western theories and methods could not be fruitfully applied to study Indian social problems. In the absence of any cumulative knowledge based on cultural understanding and field-testing, these studies did not yield any real insight and solutions of the Indian social problems needed for theoretical and methodological breakthroughs.

A parallel development was cross-cultural testing of psychological concepts and theories. For Indian psychologists who always showed an international orientation, it was an opportunity to operate on a wider plane and to influence developments in mainstream psychology. The cross-cultural movement found natural patronage in India and a large number of Indian psychologists joined this international movement. They occupied important positions in the International Association of Cross-Cultural Psychology and played prominent role in augmenting this movement. However, as noted by D. Sinha (1997), the cross-cultural work only led to testing of Western theories on Indian samples. Very rarely studies originated from the needs of the Indian society or tested Indian concepts in other cultures. Indiscriminate search for cultural differences and similarities made such ventures superficial, without providing much understanding of the culture or the contemporary problems of Indian society. To a large extent cross-cultural psychology remained a methodological enterprise and culture remained a peripheral concern (Misra & Gergen, 1993). In recent years, cross-cultural psychology itself is going through a crisis and the classical conception of culture, that was the basis of most research in this area, is being seriously questioned (Miller, 1998).

The third stream is that of indigenous psychology. At the core of indigenization is the belief that all psychological knowledge is rooted in the prevalent worldview of a society and is

conditioned by its historical and meta-theoretical considerations. D. Sinha (1994) has talked about two types of indigenization. The first is an outcome of adaptation of the mainstream (western) psychology in a different cultural setup. This adaptation is along the lines argued by John Adair. A large body of research in India can be included in this kind of indigenization in which cultural concepts and practices are examined employing western theories and approaches. The other kind of indigenization is that which is based on a systematic analysis of the culture-bound concepts and categories. Such indigenization focuses on the contemporary relevance of cultural heritage and native theories, and is termed as 'Indian Psychology'. This stream has primarily relied on the rich storehouse of knowledge found in Indian scriptures and philosophical texts of last 2-3 millennium. The work of Kakar (1991, 2003, 2008) can be cited as good example of research which finely blend these two streams of indigenization.

Indian psychology has developed around the existential quest to overcome human suffering and in the process to raise the person to higher levels of awareness and achievement. Thus, Indian psychology endeavours not only to provide an understanding of the nature of a person, the causes and consequences of his/her conduct, but also to explore the methods and means of transforming the person in pursuit of perfection in being, certainty in knowing and happiness in feeling. Indian psychology focuses on the inner-self which is accessible through subjective methods of self-verification. The beginning of Indian psychology can be traced in the writings of many eminent thinkers, like Vivekanand and Sri Aurobindo in the early part of the last Century. The monumental work of Jadunath Sinha (1934/1958; 1961) on Indian psychology can be considered as a landmark in formally establishing it as an independent discipline. The books of Ramachandra Rao (*Development of psychological thought in India*, 1962) Ragunath Safaya (*Indian Psychology*, 1975) gave it further impetus in the early years. These efforts to rejuvenate psychology in the ancient texts intensified in the eighties and nineties. Some notable publications of this period are by Paranjpe (1984; 1998), Chakraborty (1995), Saraswathi (1999) and K. Ramakrishna Rao (1988; 2002, 2005). There is a rich and growing body of research in this area and many excellent reviews are available. This stream has built not only on the interpretation of traditional concepts and theories in contemporary idiom, but also on their integration within a broader, global perspective. Cornelissen (2000, 2005) has pleaded that psychological knowledge from the Indian spiritual tradition needs to be integrated in the teaching

programmes. According to Cornelissen the core of its curriculum could be Indian theories of self and consciousness.

Psychology in the new millennium

Clearly, by the turn of this new millennium, the academic scenario is changing in India. The scientific community is better prepared now than in the past to accept a psychology rooted in native wisdom and philosophical traditions. Psychologists in India are increasingly aware of the wide gap between their academic pursuits and the real-life problems of people. The replicative nature of research endeavours, antiquated and obsolete teaching programmes, and lack of applied orientation have devoid the discipline of any professional momentum. Indian psychologists want to break free from the theoretical and methodological constraints of the discipline to grapple with the real issues of development and to act as social catalysts in the change process. Indian psychologists are also aware that if they fail to take up the challenge, they are likely to be completely marginalized.

The concern over the dominance of American psychology and attempts to develop psychology appropriate to indigenous cultures and societies is common not only to the third world countries but also to the second world countries of Europe (Moghaddam, 1987). The need for developing indigenous perspectives of one's culture has been felt by psychologists in many countries in all the continents. Thus, it is not a culture-specific phenomenon, limited to a few Asian societies. Indian psychology is indigenous psychology in that it is a psychology derived from indigenous thought systems and therefore is clearly best suited to address India's specific psychological issues and problems. It is, however, more than indigenous psychology for the reason that it offers psychological models and theories appropriate to address problems of social conflicts, violence and mental health in other societies.

Four factors have contributed to this change of attitudes and perceptions of Indian psychology. One is the failure of Western psychology to deal with their own societal problems. It has increasingly been realized that positivistic psychology only provides a fragmented and superficial understanding of human feelings and behaviour. The growing problems of social and family violence, mental health, moral decay, etc., have brought out the gross limitations of mainstream western psychology. Humanistic and transpersonal movements in the 60s have been

the protest movements against brute empiricism in psychological research. A need was felt to bring back spirituality and religiosity in psychological research, which were banished from psychology for almost a hundred and fifty years (see special issue of the American Psychologist, January 2004). All these contemporary developments are in response to the acutely felt limitations of psychology developed within the framework of modern science, which led to new ways of thinking in terms of feminism, social constructionism, postmodernism and the like, which are much closer to eastern philosophies. The movement toward positive psychology (Snyder & Lopez, 2002) also has many ingredients of Indian psychology.

Two, is the growing popularity of Yoga and other spiritual systems of India in the West. In the past few decades more and more persons with spiritual training and experiences from India have been visiting other countries and have acquired a large following. They have been responsible for disseminating the Indian spiritual tradition. Among them, Maharishi Mahesh Yogi and Swami Rama are some prominent gurus who have been able to draw the attention of academic psychologists. Sri Aurobindo's Integral Yoga and Integral Psychology attracted worldwide attention. Mahesh Yogi's Transcendental Meditation went through rigorous experimental testing at Harvard and many other universities. Swami Rama offered himself to extensive medical testing at the Meninger Foundation Laboratory, New York, where he demonstrated many yogic feats. These Indian masters were able to demonstrate convincingly the power of mind over body and have contributed significantly towards evoking interest in the Indian psychological perspectives. Publications of Sri Aurobindo Ashram, Puducherry, and the Himalayan International Institute for Yoga Sciences, Philosophy, and Religion in Honesdale, Pennsylvania, founded by Swami Rama, are valuable for their significant contributions in expounding the psychological insights of Vedanta, Yoga, Samkhya and other Indian systems. These and many other accomplished spiritual masters of the Indian tradition have played an important role in popularizing Indian psychology in the world (Paranjpe, 2005).

Three, is the secular nature of Indian psychology. It is a gradual acknowledgement that Indian psychology of consciousness has much to offer in terms of self-growth rather than as religious traditions. Interest in the study of altered state phenomena since 1960s and the founding of transpersonal psychology as a sub-discipline, encouraged psychologists involved in them to examine the indigenous perspectives available in many religious traditions of the east. It was recognized clearly that modern psychology has nothing to offer regarding the

spiritual/transcendental dimension of human nature either to understand others or for personal growth (Tart, 1975). Unfortunately, most academic psychologists in India have not appreciated this fact, and consider Indian psychology as part of the revivalistic movement.

Four, with India emerging as a major economic power in the world, there is a renewed interest in Indian values, philosophies and practices, as well as in the strength and resilience of Indian society. The very Indian culture and philosophy which was debunked for India's poverty and backwardness by many western Indologists (Max Muller, for example) is now seen behind India's success stories. Indian research is now taken more seriously by western psychologists, and as a consequence (ironically), by Indian psychologists themselves.

The newly emerging psychology is rooted in traditional Indian thought and practices. As stated in the Pondicherry Manifesto (2002), "*Rich in content, sophisticated in its methods and valuable in its applied aspects, Indian psychology is pregnant with possibilities for the birth of new models in psychology that would have relevance not only for India but also to psychology in general.*" The plurality of Indian tradition and an ethos of accommodating diverse thought systems provide a rich gold mine for creatively building a new psychology. However, despite all diversity and distinctiveness there are some features common across all systems and schools relevant to Indian psychology. Some of these common features which give Indian Psychology a distinct identity are briefly discussed here.

Indian psychology can be deemed as **universal**. It cannot be subsumed under indigenous or cultural psychology if that implies delimiting the scope of psychological inquiry. Indian psychology deals with the perennial issues of human existence which are not bound by any geographical region or time period. Centuries back the sages and thinkers were raising the same questions and dealing with the same problems that are pertinent today, and in this sense Indian psychology is both ancient and contemporary at the same time. Indeed, the use of the term 'Indian psychology' is more of a convenience; may be a more appropriate term is 'psychology of Indian origin'. While the roots of Indian psychology are decidedly Indian, it was never proposed as the psychology of Indian people. For instance, Buddhist psychology, which is an integral part of Indian psychology, was developed in Sri Lanka, Tibet and Japan among other countries. Most of these theories are propounded as trans-historical, dealing with the essential human nature and ways to harness human potential.

Another important feature of Indian psychology is that it primarily deals with the **inner state** of a person, taking consciousness as the primary subject matter of study. Consciousness as a state of being is not an object but is conceived as undifferentiated subjectivity without any content. It can be studied only indirectly through its various manifestations. Buddhism refers to a stream of consciousness as the basis of the subjective feeling of continuity and identity which affects our all perceptions, thoughts, actions and emotions. Human consciousness is considered hierarchical, the highest state being of pure consciousness, bliss and truth. Distortions in consciousness are due to active interference of mind and body which limits our awareness, obscures our knowledge and feelings and cause suffering. The goal of life is to attain this state of pure consciousness where the knowledge is direct, immediate and intuitive, and not mediated by sensory inputs. Yoga and meditation are the tools to attain this transcendental state of pure consciousness.

It however should not be misconstrued that Indian psychology is not concerned about human conditions of poverty, injustice and pain. Indian psychology does not dismiss the empirical research in these areas but provides a broader perspective within which their findings should make sense. The theories and practices of Ayurveda are the fine examples of how mundane can be blended with the transcendental.

Indian psychology is **spiritual** in its orientation. Spiritual does not mean otherworldly, nor does it mean being religious or dogmatic. Spirituality hereby implies taking into consideration the whole range of human progression, without making a distinction between natural and supernatural. It connotes the faith in the existence of higher powers and the possibility of relating to them to seek the higher order truth of life. Spirituality has opened up the possibilities of developing broader theories of human existence to understand paranormal powers, creativity and intuitive thinking, which many people exhibit. It can be stated that spirituality and sacred go together, though in Indian thought no dichotomy is maintained between science and spirituality. Transcendence and state of pure consciousness are held as empirical facts in Indian psychology grounded in the experiences of many and attainable for anyone who follows systematic procedures and practices. Though spirituality is at the core of most of the Indian theories it is not bound by any particular faith or ism and serves to provide a secular account of human nature.

Indian psychology is based on **veridical** methods. It should be clear that as a human science of consciousness its methods ought to be different from the methods of physical sciences. However it does not permit it to be a less stringent science. Methods of observation and experimentation are evolved to study the inner functioning of a person. In these methods of self-observation no distinction is made between experience and observation, where true knowledge is not considered as abstract and impersonal but as realization of one's being. There are methods of direct observation (e.g., intuition) in contrast to those methods which rely on sensory and mental mediation. These methods rely on the blending of first person and second person perspectives. Taken together these two perspectives provide personal, subjective and non-relational verification and in-group inter-subjective validity. These methods work well within guru (second person) – pupil (first person) tradition. Methods of yoga and meditation have been used for centuries to test, experiment and empirically validate higher mental states.

Indian psychology is **applied**. It is not just concerned about testing the existing theories and developing generalizable propositions, but more importantly, about the practices that can be used for the transformation of human conditions towards perfection. That is, transformation of the person to higher levels of achievement and well-being. The goal of Indian psychology is to help the person transcend from a conditional state (mechanical and habitual thinking) to an unconditional state of freedom and liberation. This transformation, in more mundane terms, implies becoming more objective, discretionary, equi-poised and knowing about the sources of distortion. Indian psychology extensively deals with ways to deal with human suffering and lead one on the path of personal growth. The techniques of yoga and meditation have contributed in a significant way in controlling the mind and feelings.

This newly emerging science of Indian origin calls for a paradigm shift in psychological research. A dominant view is that the western and the Indian paradigms are irreconcilable and cannot have a meeting ground. Indian concepts and theories are grounded in different notions of human nature, epistemology, values and world-view, than the western ones. The point is that we need both the paradigms to cover the whole range of human possibilities. Whereas the methodology of western psychology focuses on the study of the 'other' person, Indian psychology (as other eastern psychologies) focuses on the study of 'own-self'. We need both first person and third person approach to research to bring about desired changes in human societies. The experiential basis of knowledge generation is common to theories and practices of

many other eastern philosophies, including Zen, Tao and Buddhism. The proponents of this position posit that building a more harmonious and conflict-free world order where people are able to actualize their inner potential can be a valid goal of research endeavours.

In more recent times, efforts to build Indian psychology as a vibrant discipline have intensified. Several conferences (Puducherry, 2001, 2002, 2004; Kollam, 2001; Delhi, 2002, 2003, 2007; Vishakhapatnam, 2002, 2003, 2006; Bengaluru, 2007) in recent times have given impetus to this movement of Indian Psychology. A number of publications on Indian psychology, such as Kuppuswami's *Elements of Ancient Indian Psychology* (1985), Indra Sen's *Integral Psychology* (1986), Misra and Mohanty's *Perspectives on Indigenous Psychology* (2002) have the potential of serving as textbooks. More recently, Joshi and Cornelissen's edited volume, *Consciousness, Indian Psychology and Yoga* (2004); K.R. Rao and Marwaha's *Towards a Spiritual Psychology* (2006); K.R. Rao, Paranjpe and Dalal's *Handbook of Indian Psychology* (2008) and this particular volume provide rich resource material for teaching and research in this area. It needs to be made clear that the purpose of testing ancient Indian theories and knowledge is not to prove their superiority. It is a movement toward contemporarizing Indian theories and testing their relevance for enhancing human competencies and well-being. It is against this backdrop that Indian psychology is gearing itself to usher in a new era of many exciting possibilities.

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